ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

Provided is a method for disrupting cell expression at the mRNA level in mammalian cells using a post-transcriptional gene silencing method known as "RNA mediated interference" or "RNA interference" ("RNAi"). It also provides, for the first time, a demonstration of a RNAi technique that is applicable to human cells and cell lines, as well as for administration to human patients. Thus, this discovery of the value of RNAi for inhibiting mammalian cell expression offers a tool for developing new strategies for blocking gene function, and for producing RNA-based drugs to treat human disease and evaluate vaccine development targets, some of which may not be readily apparent on the basis of sequence information alone.